

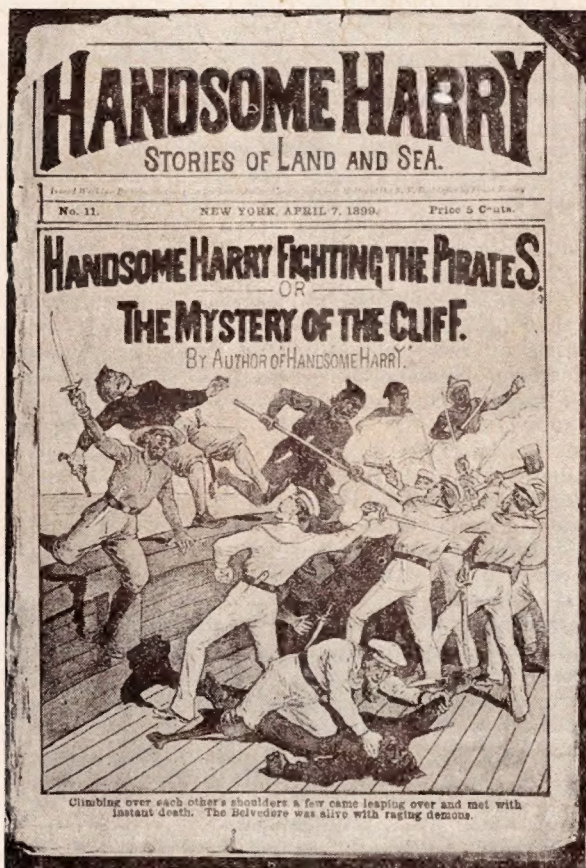
# DIME NOVEL ROUND-UP

A monthly magazine devoted to the collecting, preservation and literature of the old-time dime and nickel novels, libraries and popular story papers.

Vol. 27 No. 5

May 15, 1959

Whole No. 320



## DIME NOVEL SKETCHES #2

### Handsome Harry

The only octavo sized colored cover issued by Frank Tousey. Began January 27, 1899 and ended with No. 16 May 12, 1899. Actual size  $8\frac{3}{4} \times 5\frac{3}{4}$ , 32 pages, handsome colored cover. The Handsome Harry story was originally published in Britain and widely reprinted in the United States in Boys of New York, Happy Days and others.



## BUFFALO BILL IN BOUND-BOOK FICTION

by Don Russell

J. Edward Leithead in his recent series "By the Author of 'Buffalo Bill'" and in previous articles has given us a comprehensive round-up of the hundreds of dime novels written about Col. William F. Cody. In curious contrast with this is his rare appearance in bound books of fiction, juvenile or adult.

An almost immediate successor of the dime novels were the bound books that began to show up in five-and-ten-cent stores back in the days when such stores advertised, "Nothing over ten cents." Cheaply printed and bound to be sold for a dime, these are nevertheless books, described as bound in "pictorial boards," which means cardboard covered with paper which usually included a colored illustrative decoration.

Elmer Sherwood was author of three books about Buffalo Bill apparently produced for this trade. My copies of them differ. "Buffalo Bill's Boyhood" is a small book, 4¼ by 7 inches, it is sewed, on a fair grade of white paper, and bears the imprint of Western Publishing Co., Racine, Wisconsin. "Buffalo Bill and the Pony Express" is about a quarter-inch wider, is stapled instead of sewn, printed on a dark gray paper, and bears the imprint of Whitman Publishing Co., Racine, a publisher who made a

specialty of the ten-cent trade—probably "Western" is or was a subsidiary. Neither book is copyrighted, and the only clew to date is "1925" scribbled by a former owner of the second book. My copy of "Buffalo Bill—The Boys' Friend" is in sharp contrast. It is a full sized book, 5¼ by 8 inches, bound in cloth with a handsome full color paper decoration covering the face. The same full-color picture of Buffalo Bill shooting a buffalo with a pistol, but without the title, is used as a frontispiece. It also was published by Whitman and was copyrighted in 1917. It has 246 pages; the others have 121 and 125. If you note that this also totals 246, you are right; it is a combination of the two, an old dime novel custom. My guess here is that "Buffalo Bill—The Boys' Friend" is the original edition and that the two were made from it later. The illustrator, named on all three, is Neil O'Keeffe. Who was Elmer Sherwood? In 1917 he was author of "Lucky, the Boy Scout," "Lucky, the Young Gentleman," etc., says the title page. The later books list "Ted Marsh, the Boy Scout," and "Ted Marsh on an Important Mission" and an advertising page urges readers to "watch for the important announcement" of "Ted Marsh and the Pony Express." It states that a Chicago newsboy is

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the hero of the series. Ralph Cummings adds "Ted March and the Enemy" and "Ted March, the Young Volunteer." And that is all I know about Elmer Sherwood.

Another series of 5-and-10-cent-store publications was the Big Little Books published by the Whitman Publishing Company approximately 1931 to 1946. No. 713 is "Buffalo Bill and the Pony Express" by Leon Morgan, illustrated by Hal Arbo of the W Lazy 5 Ranch, copyrighted 1934, according to information given me by Edward T. LeBlanc. Another title listed without further information is "Buffalo Bill Plays a Lone Hand." Reprints of this series (about 1946) were called Better Little Books.

Perhaps the best of all juvenile fiction books about Buffalo Bill is "Buffalo Bill and the Overland Trail" by Edwin L. Sabin, a serious historian. It was published in 1914 by J. B. Lippincott Company, Philadelphia and London, with five illustrations, including a frontispiece in color, by Charles H. Stephens, a leading illustrator of the period. There is also a portrait of Cody and a four-page "chronological table" of his career. This was one of the "Trail Blazer Series" to which Sabin contributed also "On the Plains with Custer," and "With Carson and Fremont."

"Red Eagle, Buffalo Bill's Adopted Son," by M. Moran (her first name is Mabel) published by Lippincott in 1948 is a lively juvenile about an Indian boy and Buffalo Bill. Buffalo Bill appears as a character briefly in "Saddle Up for Sunlight" by Allan Vaughan Elston, an adult Western published by Lippincott in 1952. Its scene is the vicinity of Cody, Wyoming, and it is as a resident of that city that Bill is introduced—probably no dime novel ever got around to that setting. Cody gets brief mention as pony express rider in "The Saga of Slade," an historical novel by Don Prophet, Pageant Press, Inc., New York, 1958.

The first dime novel written about Buffalo Bill, "Buffalo Bill, the King of Border Men" by Ned Buntline, was reprinted several times as a bound

book, under its original title and also as "Buffalo Bill and His Adventures in the West," in 1886 by J. S. Ogilvie and Company, New York.

That is all I know about unless you include the biographical juveniles, which often are not far from dime novel style fiction. These include three titled just "Buffalo Bill," a pictorial book for younger readers by Ingri and Edgar Parin d'Aulaire (Doubleday & Co., Inc., Garden City, N. Y., 1952); by (Doris) Shannon Garst, (J. Messner, New York, 1948) and by Frank Lee Beals (Wheeler Pub. Co., Chicago, 1943); "Buffalo Bill, Boy of the Plains," by Augusta Stevenson (Bobbs-Merrill, Indianapolis, 1948); "The Story of Buffalo Bill" by Edmund Collier (Grosset & Dunlap, New York, 1952), "Young Buffalo Bill," by George Gowdy (a pseudonym) (Lothrop, Lee & Shephard, 1955); and one in the "Landmark" series, "Buffalo Bill and His Wild West," by Walter Havighurst.

The comic books might also be regarded as successors of the dime novels. Except for some about "Buffalo Bill Junior" they have not had many on Cody. One put out by Youthful Magazines, Inc., Holyoke, Mass., as No. 6—June (1951) Vol. I was called just "Buffalo Bill" but a label gives its contents as "Chief Rain in the Face" and "Buffalo Bill and the Twisted Monsters" (which is a good dime novel title). The other "Buffalo Bill" was in Classics Illustrated No. 106, April, 1953 (Gilbertson Co., New York).

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## The Pseudonyms of Edward S. Ellis

by Denis R. Rogers

### Additional Information Since Completion of Part III

Henry J. Thomas, Mrs. Henry J. Thomas, Colin Barker: In the British Museum there is a cloth bound book, which was published at two shillings. The cover reads: *The Standard American Library/The Ranger*, and has the cover and frontispiece illustration from that dime novel (Beadle's Sixpenny American Library No. 33) as cover illustration. The title page reads *American Standard Library/The Ranger/ etc., etc./By/Edward S. Ellis/London/C. H. Clarke; 13, Paternoster Row.*

The book in fact consists of three tales, "Kent, the Ranger" (96 pages), "Nathan Todd. A Sequel to 'Bill Bid-don'" (112 pages) and "The Wrecker's Prize" (110 pages), each paged separately, but without individual title pages. This absence of individual title pages is *prima facie* evidence that Ellis was the author of all three stories.

However, "The Wrecker's Prize" is a reprint of Beadle's Sixpenny American Library No. 41, where the author is given as Henry J. Thomas; therefore the C. H. Clarke book is *prima facie* evidence that Henry J. Thomas was a pseudonym of Edward S. Ellis.

Nevertheless Ellis authorship of the Henry J. Thomas tales seems improbable upon closer investigation.

There is some evidence that C. H. Clarke acquired the publications of the London Beadle house, after George Routledge ceased issuing the English Beadles early in 1868. The *American Standard Library* volume is undated, but was registered at the British Museum on 22nd December, 1868, and appears to be either (a) a reprint of one of the two unlocated numbers of Beadle's American Library Tales (See "The House of Beadle & Adams", Vol. I, Page 122); or, (b) a binding together of remainder stock for the pagination, size, etc., are identical with the three originals

in Beadle's Sixpenny American Library (Numbers 33, 9 and 41). This evidence suggests that the absence of individual title pages could easily be accounted for by carelessness, either in preparing the original American Library Tale or in binding together Beadle/Routledge remainders. Moreover the use of the words "etc., etc.," after "The Ranger" makes the lone title page ambiguous.

"The Golden Belt; or, The Carib's Pledge" by Colin Barker (Beadle's Dime Novels No. 5, 15 Aug. 1860) was credited to Henry J. Thomas, when reprinted with "The Allens" and "The Wrong Man" as No. III of Beadle's Standard Library of Romance (The New York Beadle House's counterpart to The American Library Tales) on 30 Aug. 1862. Please note that here the lone title page is unequivocal.

Thus, if Henry J. Thomas were a pen name of Edward S. Ellis, then Colin Barker was another of his pseudonyms and Beadle published an Ellis story before the famous "Seth Jones" (Beadle's Dime Novels No. 8, 2 Oct. 1860). That would make nonsense of the celebrated story about the acceptance of "Seth Jones" by Beadle from an untried young author.

Something of the gloss of that story has been removed by the discovery that Ellis did in fact sell a full length story early in 1859 ("Dick Flinton; or, Life on the Border," serialization of which began in "The New York Dispatch" on 5 March 1859—Vol. 14, No. 16. This tale was reprinted with certain name changes by Beadle as "Kent, The Ranger" in September 1863) but, even so, there is no evidence that (a) he used any pen name before 1862 (Nick Wilson for Street & Smith) or (b) he contributed to Beadle before submitting the manuscript of "Seth Jones."

The Colin Barker tale is, to my mind, the most emphatic evidence a-

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gallant Ellis authorship of the Henry J. Thomas tales, but the connection of the name with John Lewis (25 Feb. 1784 to 15 Aug. 1858) must also be mentioned. Professor Johannsen discovered by comparison of texts (See "The House of Beadle & Adams, Vol. II, Page 181) that Beadle's Dime Novel No. 43 (29 Aug. 1862): "The Allens. A Tale of the Great Kanawha" by Henry J. Thomas was in fact an abbreviated reprint of "Young Kate" by John Lewis, originally published by Harper & Brothers in 1844.

Since John Lewis died in 1858 and none of the other Henry J. Thomas tales has been traced back to him, it is reasonable to assume that the abridgement of "Young Kate" was not that author's own work.

While there is little doubt that, even at that early stage in his writing career, Ellis (then a schoolmaster) would have been quite capable of abridging "Young Kate" to dime novel length, I do not think he would have countenanced the plagiaristic aspect of the matter.

Finally mention must be made of Mrs. Henry J. Thomas, which was used as a by-line for two Beadle's Dime Novels (No. 146—24 Mar. 1868 and No. 178—25 May 1869). Three reprints of No. 146 (No. 117 of the Quarto edition of Beadle's Boy's Library of Sport, Story & Adventure (5 Mar. 1884), No. 124 of the Octavo edition (28 Aug. 1886) and No. 427 of Beadle's Pocket Library (16 Mar. 1892)) vary the by-line to plain Henry J. Thomas. Whether Mr. and Mrs. Henry J. Thomas were in fact the same person remains undetermined.

Be that as it may, I have no hesitation in relegating Henry J. Thomas, Colin Barker and Mrs. Henry J. Thomas to the improbable Ellis pen name category.

Oscar Ellis: In Ralph Adimari's

article: "The William J. Benners Pseudonyms" ("The Roundup," Vol. 27 No. 2 (Whole No. 317), Feb. 15, 1959), Oscar Ellis is given as a pseudonym of Edward S. Ellis.

I investigated this claim some time back and rejected it as very improbable. Consequently I left the name out of this article; however, now that the suggestion has been made in a printed article, I had better place on record the adverse evidence.

"Just His Luck" by Oscar Ellis (Frank Leslie's "Young American," Vol. I No. 26, 24 Oct. 1874 to No. 40, 30 Jan. 1875) is a reprint of the anonymous serial, "Just His Luck; or, Peter Pullwell's Struggle with Fate" ("The Young Englishman," London, Vol. III No. 75, 19 Sep. 1874 to Vol. IV No. 89, 26 Dec. 1874). It was announced in No. 74 (12 Sep. 1874) as by the author of "Racketty Ralph" and "The Bad Boy of the Family." Although I have not yet established which English author wrote these three tales, it is clear that the author was English from the nature of the stories. "Just His Luck," for example, is described as a story teeming with the fun and frolic of school life.

The style of the English school story of the period is unmistakable and so it is virtually certain that Edward S. Ellis did not write "Just His Luck." As a corollary, Oscar Ellis could not have been his pen name.

My own view is that Frank Leslie printed "Just His Luck" from "The Young Englishman" and coined the name, Oscar Ellis, to make it look as if he had taken on a new author. It may have been that the surname, Ellis, was deliberately used to suggest a connection with the popular author.

This is evidently one of Mr. Benners' few errors and I have no hesitation in placing Oscar Ellis in the improbable Ellis pen name category.

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## COMMEMORATIVE STAMP FOR CENTENARY OF DIME NOVEL CONSIDERED

Mr. Howard B. Silsbee has been busily engaged in presenting information to the Commemorative Stamp Advisory Committee to convince them that a stamp should be issued commemorating the 100th anniversary of the issuance of the first dime novel. With the many paper back book publishers existing today tracing their beginnings to June 9, 1860 when the first paper back was issued, there is a chance of favorable consideration.

Mr. Silsbee called on the committee recently and submitted to them a short history of the dime novel. He also pointed out the influence the dime novel has had on American literature, plays, radio and television. These same themes are used today, namely, the detective story, the western, war stories, athletic stories and pioneering. The committee now has the recommendation under consideration and if it feels that it would be a worthy subject for a commemorative it will so recommend to the Postmaster General.

It is hoped that favorable action will result. Mr. Silsbee deserves the support of all members of the Happy Hour Brotherhood.

### ERRATA

Page 84 of the November 1954 issue of the Dime Novel Round-up mentioned that P. T. Barnum wrote "Barnum's Young Sandow" in Happy Days. The author's name should read P. T. Raymond.

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(Copy of letter from the Deadwood (S. Dak.) Chamber of Commerce.)

January 15, 1959

Mr. Howard Silsbee  
Irvington, N. J.

Dear Mr. Silsbee:

Please pardon the delay in reply to your good letters and the information which you furnished us relative to the possibility of establishing a WESTERN HEROS HALL OF FAME in our Historic City. We assure you that the delay was not due to lack of interest but projects of this type seem to require greater deliberation and more serious consideration than our regular Chamber of Commerce activity.

The proposal has been discussed by the Advertising Committee and members of the Board of Directors but no definite action has been taken, due largely to the fact that our operating budget is so limited and most of our members who serve on an annual basis are a little reluctant to incur expense that will involve incoming members. We are, however, just entering into a new year and perhaps this is the opportune time to renew our efforts.

We note in your letter to the Mayor you suggested that the City of Deadwood cooperate to the extent of donating land for a building or shrine and we feel sure that this could be accomplished. In the past, we have discussed restoration of DEADWOOD DICK'S CABIN (Richard E. Clarke), which is located just at the outskirts of Deadwood. If you felt this was adequate, we are sure it could be moved to our Municipal Park in the center of town, and if not, we can practically assure you that a favorable site would be available, free of charge.

Perhaps you have other suggestions and we will await some further word from you. We are definitely interested and can assure you of 100% cooperation but believe that the move should be originated and organized outside of Deadwood to avoid any semblance of commercialism.

Sincerely,

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